



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

GUSTAV ROETHE'S 'DIE ENTSTEHUNG DES
URFAUST'

With the exception of the Bible, there is perhaps no work in literature which offers such fascinating problems in higher criticism as Goethe's *Faust*: the profound scope of the drama, touching the deepest questions of human destiny; its high position as a product of literary art; its unique development, extending through sixty years of Goethe's life; its derivation from many historical and literary sources; the author's fitful method of spasmodic fragmentary composition in short dashes of almost daemonic improvisation—all these factors invite and demand an analysis of Goethe's intentions and psychologic development throughout the entire process of writing.

No scholar has applied the canons of criticism upon this problem more searchingly and ingeniously than Wilhelm Scherer, who united the resources of biography, psychology, literary history, and stylistic comparison in dissecting the tangled tissues of the completed, though never consistent, work.

It is well known that Goethe's initial publication of parts of the play, under the title, "*Faust. Ein Fragment.*", consisted of 17 somewhat detached and very fragmentary scenes, which he sent from Italy in 1790 to be included in Volume 7 of the first edition of his collected works. Of these scenes, *Wald und Höhle* appears much later, relative to the others, than it did in the completed drama. The action goes no further than Margaret's swoon during the funeral-mass in the Cathedral.

The completed First Part (in effect, the standard form of all later editions) was not printed until 1808, when it appeared in Volume 8 of the second collection of Goethe's Works.

As a material text-basis, Scherer had use of these two sources only. A year after his death, his brilliant and over-daring conjectures were subjected to a severe objective test by the discovery of the so-called *Urfaust*.

Erich Schmidt, the noted successor to Scherer's chair of German Literature in the University of Berlin, was invited in 1887 to Dresden, to look through a mass of papers which had belonged to Frl. v. Göchhausen, one of the maids-of-honor at the Court of Weimar when Goethe first arrived, in 1775. "My lot was like that of Saul, the son of Kish, who went forth to look for the she-asses of his father, and found a kingdom." Schmidt was just about to give over his survey of unimportant scraps, when a thick quarto, labeled "Extracts, Copies, etc.," left by Frl. v. Göchhausen, challenged his closer inspection. In this book he came upon a MS version of 20 scenes of *Faust*, copied in Frl. v. Göchhausen's hand, exhibiting countless and most striking variants from any known text. Moreover, this material included the 4 scenes which complete the First Part, so

that the still fragmentary play shows a complete dramatic development from Faust's opening soliloquy to the death of Margaret. The last of these scenes, that in the Prison, as well as the earlier group in Auerbach's Cellar, are in prose.¹

It is universally agreed that this Urfaust was copied by Frl. v. Göchhausen very soon after Goethe's arrival in Weimar, and that all its matter had been brought by him from Frankfort. Schmidt was of the opinion that no part of it had been composed earlier than 1773.

The convincing proof which it offered as to the fallacy of some of Scherer's conjectures concerning a late origin for certain of its parts had a natural, but excessive influence in discrediting his general method.

In the Proceedings of the Berlin Academy of Sciences, published as late as last July (*Sitzungsberichte*, XXXII, 642 ff.), appears an extended article by Professor Gustav Roethe of the University of Berlin, the present distinguished incumbent of the professorship occupied in turn by Scherer and Schmidt; the paper takes up anew, and with minutely searching analysis, the question as to the original composition of the Urfaust in its varied parts.

I

Hardly any philological investigations, says Roethe, had ever impressed him so deeply as Scherer's fine and fruitful conjectures as to the origins of Goethe's Faust. The cheap and superficial contempt so often bestowed upon this method of research has filled him with shame and indignation. Scherer lacked the Urfaust, but Erich Schmidt, flushed, perhaps, by exultation at his fortunate find, leaped to the conclusion that the Urfaust represented *all* that Goethe had composed up to the end of 1775. "Higher Criticism" (which played the chief part in the days of Lachmann's analysis of the Nibelungenlied) seemed to have become discredited as a method just at the time of Schmidt's discovery. Roethe craves a revival of that daring sort of conjectural criticism on a heroic scale, which is not terrified by the possibility of falling into errors.

¹It may be permissible to mention just here that the *Berliner Tageblatt* recently reported a dramatic representation of the Urfaust in the Deutsches Theater, put on the stage by Reinhardt as a monument of Goethe's Storm and Stress period, which has an attractive appeal because the poet had not yet been subdued to the "resignation" of his maturer years. The stage is excessively narrow, 2 or 3 yards wide, seen through a tall, pointed Gothic window. "Everything is played in the elevator-shaft," comments the critic, Fritz Engel. Some scenes are very effective: Faust in his study; Valentine between the narrow, sky-scraping rows of houses; less so the carousing in Auerbach's cellar, seen through this somewhat ecclesiastical framework.

The "mistakes" of Scherer drove Faust-criticism into unfruitful fields: it has practically insisted on stopping at the Urfaust, in tracing origins.

The real Faust-riddle lies rather in the First than in the Second Part. In Part One, even in the Urfaust, very different and contradictory stages of Goethe's development are recorded;—our generation arrogantly insists on an ideal unity and harmony, and forces them into existence where they never belonged. An interpreter who ignores the processes, situations, and diverse times of origin, cannot possibly understand the finished work.

Goethe never attempted to recast his play into full consistency, and it is absurd to speak of such a thing. A consistent unifying by persistent processes of interpretation, in one assumed direction, leads astray: the most instructive example of such a perverse method being found in its forced application to the Bible.

The Urfaust shows, first, that the hero was destined to land in hell, like all the other Storm and Stress Fausts, as well as the familiar figure in the chap-books and earlier dramas (except Lessing's sketch), but our day merely projects *the* Faust of the Weimar and the Italian periods back to Goethe's youthful conception in Frankfort.

The basal idea of a constantly unsatisfied creative impulse (the *élan créatif*), so fully associated with our conception of Faust at present, belongs to the late period of Goethe's close association with Schiller.

A hideous fate awaiting powerful heroes was, in general, demanded by the Storm and Stress dramatists: Mahomet, Egmont, Prometheus; Gerstenberg's Ugolino; Leisewitz' Guido; Klinger's Otto were all doomed to tragic and necessitated destruction. So with Schiller's Fiesco and Karl Moor. The Storm and Stress geniuses had an aristocratic, proud conviction that their ebullient Titanism was too dynamic for conditions in the everyday world; they inevitably led to a fatal crash, amid blaring trumpetings of grandiose defiance. The Urfaust shows no signs that Goethe had as yet overcome this view. The Italian Period could first have effected such a change.

II

Roethe begins a more detailed survey with a consideration of a long passage in Faust's second interview with Mephistopheles (ll. 1770-1833). These lines are not included in the Urfaust. In the Fragment of 1790 this passage begins abruptly, after the midnight discourse with Wagner:

Und was der ganzen Menschheit zugetheilt ist,
Will ich in meinem innern Selbst geniessen, etc.

According to Roethe, these lines belong to a very early period, full of defiant Titanic mood—whereas the preceding lines (first printed in A, 1808) are a pessimistic wail. The tone of the passage as appearing in the Fragment of 1790 is that of *stürmende Jugend*, and it belongs to the Frankfort period. It contains the highly significant words,

Und so mein eigen Selbst zu ihrem Selbst erweitern,
Und, wie sie selbst, am End' auch ich zerscheitern—

in other words, Faust's Titanism is to lead inevitably to Faust's Damnation. Lines 1782-1784, although printed in the Fragment, were added later, and are inconsistent. Lines 1830-1833, also in the Fragment, are quite parallel to a letter written to Jacobi in 1774. Various scraps found in the Paralipomena are hard to place exactly, but also show the fragmentary method of authorship which underlies the Frankfort Faust.

"I brought my Faust to Weimar, with no corrections, a clean MS in unbound layers." In Italy Goethe said that he had "written all down without any preliminary sketches." The older man's memory was certainly confused. A well-known writer saw, in 1775, what Goethe already possessed of his Faust: "*Goethe apporta un sac, rempli de petits chiffons de papier; il le vida sur la table et dit: Voilà mon Faust!*" This corresponds to his own account in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*. Whatever came to him, he set down at once, so quickly that he rarely had time to put a slanting piece of paper straight, and consequently wrote off his ideas diagonally. For these somnambulistic fragments he had an especial reverence; he produced in spots, and joined these fragments together with more or less congruity. Compare the three loosely connected scenes of his *Nausikaa*-fragment. Goethe had a penchant for the operatic form, for loosely connected arias or scenes.

Schiller began at the beginning, and wrote systematically through from a previously prepared, logical argument. Many of the short scenes in Faust can have been done in one fit: Strasse; Allee; Am Brunnen; Zwinger; Dom, etc. In others we have internal indications that they were laboriously pieced together from a mosaic of disconnected fragments. The *sac rempli de petits chiffons de papier* preceded a clean copy of certain more or less "completed" scenes which he took to Weimar, and this clean copy is the Urfaust, which he lent to Fr. v. Göchhausen for her transcription.

III

The wild prose-scene "Trüber Tag" (after 4398) is especially old. Its diction is remarkably like that of his *Geschichte Gottfriedens von Berlichingen* of the year 1771. Here is to be found the cornerstone of all methodical chronology of the Urfaust.

The verbal and thought-coincidences with the first *Gottfried* are unmistakable.

Scherer concluded from this scene that Goethe began his *Faust* in prose. He divined that the Prison Scene was originally prose, a theory triumphantly substantiated by the discovery of the *Urfaust*. The power of this original scene is more gripping than in the mitigated verse into which it was recast. The weird Rabenstein-scene has always been misunderstood: It is no "Hexenzunft"; Mephistopheles lies. These figures circling about the place of execution are hovering angels, making ready to receive the soul of Gretchen. Roethe sees no connection with Bürger's *Lenore*. There is no doubt as to Gretchen's salvation, in spite of the fact that the *Urfaust* has only "Sie ist gerichtet!" at the close, and *not* the words, "Sie ist gerettet!" Rescue of Faust out of the devil's claws is not motivated. If the play were to end as indicated in the *Urfaust*, he was surely the victim of the devil.

The three last scenes belong, then, to the earliest stage of 1771-1772: they are in rhythmic, measured prose. So also the daisy-plucking, the catechizing, the cathedral-scene.

The catechizing as to "personal religion" derives, perhaps, from Friederike, the pastor's daughter of Sesenheim. The apparition of the Erdgeist is set down in prose with lyric insertions, highly characteristic of Goethe's earlier period. It should be dated about 1773, as well as "Meine Ruh' ist hin," "Ach neige, Du schmerzenreiche," but not Auerbach's Cellar.

The first Phase, then, of 1771-1772, contains the flower-scene, Gretchen's room, catechizing, Zwinger, Dom, Trüber Tag, Offen Feld, Kerker. In general it comprises the most compelling elements of Gretchen's tragedy. This theory is fortified by what Wagner borrowed for his *Kindermörderin*, namely by April 1775. It doubtless surprises some persons to learn that Goethe began the play from the Gretchen-tragedy, but his guilt toward Friederike still lay heavily upon his conscience. The heroine of 1771-1772 has nothing of the Lotte-type. The naïve, housemotherly, *genrehaft* elements of the maturer Gretchen had not yet developed from the experiences in Wetzlar. Mephisto is merely a malicious devil of the old, conventional type. There is as yet no trace of the Faust-nature, striving for the high satisfaction of creative activity. The University and scholastic motifs are also missing.

IV

The theory of the Gretchen-tragedy as starting-point has been overlooked because of the necessity of beginning with the introductory monologue,

Hab nun ach die Philosophie, etc.

Such a soliloquy at the beginning was determined by Marlowe and his successors, the Puppen- and Volksspiele.

Roethe prefers to withhold judgment as to whether Goethe was acquainted with Marlowe's Dr. Faustus as early as 1775. Nicolai had called attention to Dodsley's reprint in 1758. Goethe makes his first admission as to knowing the work in 1818, on the occasion of the publication of Wilhelm Müller's translation. However, Goethe often omitted all mention of obvious sources—as in the case of *Egmont* and *Hermann und Dorothea*. While German opinion has hitherto strongly denied any direct influence of Marlowe, Professor Otto Heller claims to have proven Goethe's obligations, and the case for Marlowe is perhaps growing stronger. Roethe was impressed by a coincidence which I noted some time ago, namely the words relating to Faust's skill as a physician (48-50):

Are not thy billes hung up as monuments,
Whereby whole Citties have escapt the plague,
And thousand desprate maladies beene easde?

This is very much like

Als er der Seuche Ziel gesetzt (1000)

and

Dacht' ich das Ende jener Pest
Vom Herrn des Himmels zu erzwingen (1028-1029).

This motif seems not to be found expressly in the Faust-books or puppet-plays.

Of possible bearing on the question is Faust 2267, where Goethe lets Altmayer say of Mephistopheles:

Ach das sind Taschenspietersachen

as Marlowe's Knight remarks concerning Faust (1018):

Ifaith he lookes much like a coniurer.

Very striking is the coincidence in the enumeration of the four faculties in the opening scene of Marlowe and in the Urfaust, where the exact order, Philosophy; Medicine; Law; Theology, is maintained; I have not found popular earlier plays which agree in this.

While the monologue comes from stage-tradition, Gretchen's tragedy derives from the young poet's innermost soul-experiences. Wilhelm Meister "jumped over four acts to make sure of the fifth." Knebel reported in 1774 that Goethe read him "one of the last scenes, and that the first scenes did not as yet exist." These facts authorize us to question the first scene as being the first part written. The introductory monologue can have been written only after Goethe's acquaintance with Hans Sachs, i. e. not before 1773, while the prose of the last scenes points to the close of 1771.

The Schülerscene is entirely in Knüttelvers, although based, to be sure, on very early Leipzig experiences. Of the three main parts, the last, referring to the medical career, is much riper than the others and abandons Knüttelvers for freer forms. It doubtless belongs to the third stage of the *Urfaust*.

Martha's first monologue (2865 ff.) is clearly derived from the peasant-woman in Sachs' *Fahrender Schüler im Paradies*; Martha is unmistakably a figure from Hans Sachs.

Lines 1-32 of the opening monologue constitute a fragment by themselves; similar are *Strasse* (2605), the beginning of *Abend* (2678-2686) and *Brunnenszene* (3544-3586). Gretchen's last soliloquy in this scene is quite in line with the second stratum. The form "Gretgen" implies a relatively early composition. The death of the mother is not yet hinted at, though Gretchen had already fallen. The mother's death must have followed immediately after the first night of union. The assumption that Gretchen at some later time made a mistake in the potion is utterly impossible; "The first love-union was blameless and necessitated; continuance and custom would drag downward and are offensive, destroying the tragic content of the motif." (In the opinion of the reviewer, this argument is among the weaker of those adduced.)

Peculiar to the second stage is the stressing of the University-milieu; the occurrence of naïve monologues in Knüttelvers. Even after her fall, Gretchen is far removed from the passion and tragic power of the first stage. The time of production is to be set in 1773-1774.

V

The third phase, of freer verse, of exalted lyric diction, belongs to 1775, when Goethe took up *Faust* vigorously.

O sähest du, voller Mondenschein

shows manifestly a solution of continuity from the preceding 32 lines. It is really a doublette, which Goethe was unwilling to throw away. The preceding lines show a confident turning to magic, the following verses are a yearning for death.

The conjuration-scene is entirely jumbled. Roethe shuffles the cards in a new fashion, to show that only one spirit was originally invoked, in other words there was no differentiation between the Makrokosmos and the Erdgeist. Perhaps the exorcism took place originally in an open field (as in the *Faustbuch*); the spirit invoked may have been Lucifer, the great fallen angel, to whom Mephistopheles was subordinate. In the final form, there is no satisfactory nexus between Mephisto and the Erdgeist. Roethe works out the *Eingangsmonolog* into five factors, of various origin.

The main parts of the Gretchen-drama (more elaborated and elevated than the first prose Gretchen-scenes) probably originated in the order in which we find them (2687-3178). Traces of the appreciation of good household management derive from the Wetzlar-period, as well as the motherly-sisterly disposition. The lines 2783-2804, in which Margaret discovers and opens the casket, a masterpiece of native innocence, revealing itself involuntarily, with a subtle, touching trace of the depressing atmosphere of poverty, show a height of subdued technic in characterization which is in sharpest contrast with the black-and-white lines of the second phase. The splendid technic of the double promenade in the garden shows great maturity.

The three chief characters have greatly matured in this third period, and have become immortal types. For the first time, Gretchen discloses her marvelous naïve charm, her motherly kindness, her fascinating, coquettish, saucy traits. Mephisto becomes more the man-of-the-world and free-thinker; Faust is incontestably the hero, who aims to achieve the totality of existence, but is not yet a constructive builder. Faust at times shows rhetorical excess; he becomes overwrought because he feels the downward drag which is destined to make him the victim of Hell—him, not Gretchen, who was to hold on to her God and her purity of soul—thanks to Friederike.

VI

To summarize: The First Phase from the end of 1771 into 1773. Prose, with incorporated lyrics. Gretchen's tragedy, motivated directly by the sense of guilt which produced Weislingen and Clavigo. The tragic heroine is Gretchen. Faust is a wretched sinner, Mephisto the evil spirit of the old legend.

Second Phase: 1773-1774. Hans Sachs doggerel-verse, a mimetic, block-print manner of expression. Faust's university environment is sketched in a spirit of drastic comedy. Faust's personality is hardly deepened. Mephisto becomes a worldly-wise, maliciously witty skeptic; his relation to Faust is still uncertain. Gretchen's utter helplessness in the grip of impending fate is introduced.

Third Phase: 1775. The period of freer rhythms. Faust, titanically striving, rises to a leading importance, Mephistopheles also develops, exhibiting a grandiose, caustic criticism and contempt for both the world and man. Margaret arrives at that quaint illumination which reveals with especial charm her simple maidenliness. Faust is not to be saved, but he wins human sympathy from which might grow a wish for his rescue, as in the case of Klopstock's *Abaddon*. The first decisive indication of Faust's rescue comes in the compact (not in U or S), which, in connection with the Prologue in Heaven, assures salvation for the striving soul. It is hardly possible to indicate

the exact time when Faust's rescue was assured: Roethe holds that this took place before 1797.

The absolute and relative results of this method of criticism, so successfully inaugurated by Scherer, will always be subject to dispute except when distinct testimony enters in confirmation. It is the nature of the Higher Criticism that it must set too high a goal, and reduce matters too much to regularity. Chance and whim cannot be subjected to method. But the fullest conviction of these limitations cannot absolve us from the duty of following again and again the path of formal criticism. Even Erich Schmidt would put the brakes down upon vehicles bound for the land of All-Knowledge. That the method now and again goes beyond its goal by no means destroys its value. "These leaves," concludes Roethe, "I have plucked along that path. They are properly to be regarded as a thankful tribute to Scherer, and his methods of Faust-criticism."

JAMES TAFT HATFIELD

Northwestern University

ENGLISH>GERMAN LITERARY INFLUENCES. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SURVEY, by Lawrence Marsden Price. University of California Publications in Modern Philology. Vol. 9, No. 1-2, pp. 1-616. 8 vo. Berkeley, 1919-1920.

When Professor Julius Goebel in the foreword to the first volume of his series, "Germanic Literature and Culture," (Oxford University Press, New York) expressed the hope that American scholarship, owing to its joint heritage of English and German culture, would develop independence and originality in the study of the multiple and complex relations of English and German literature, he had probably no thought of seeing within the short time of six years the publication of a work summarizing the studies of at least one side of these relations. The present book by Professor Lawrence Marsden Price will be welcomed by every student of the subject in question, not only because it is the first attempt of its kind but also on account of the painstaking research it represents. It is divided into two parts: Part I, the Bibliography, in which the author attempts to bring together a practically complete list of titles relating to English>German literary influences, which he defines in the introduction to mean "the influences of English literature upon German literature." Part II, the Survey, furnishes a digest of the Bibliography by the discussion of some representative works of each trend of influence. As a result we have before us a sort of history of modern German literature, accentuating English influences exclusively. It is to be hoped that the ex-